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Letter dated 30 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by His Excellency Dr. Néstor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic, on 25 September 2003 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Emyr Jones **Parry**

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Annex to the letter dated 30 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of the Argentine Republic in the general debate on 25 September 2003

The British Government welcomes the resolve of the Argentine Government to engage in positive bilateral exchanges with the United Kingdom concerning practical cooperation in the South Atlantic. My Government shares this resolve. We believe that such exchanges contribute further to the mutual understanding embodied in the 1999 Anglo-Argentine joint statement. Implementation of this statement, which covers a range of issues concerning the South Atlantic including air access, fisheries conservation, demining, plans to construct a memorial to Argentines fallen on the Islands and other confidence-building measures, shows that the United Kingdom and Argentina can manage our differences whilst developing cooperation on matters of common interest. We have continued to make steady progress in the past year.

However, we wish to recall that there is nothing in the 1999 joint statement that compromises the position of the United Kingdom in relation to its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The British Government has no doubt about its sovereignty over these territories and their surrounding maritime areas.

The elected representatives of the Islands once again expressed their own views clearly when they visited the United Nations for the debate in the United Nations Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples on 16 June 2003. They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other people, were entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. They reiterated that the people of the Falkland Islands did not wish for any change in the status of the Islands and wished the new Argentine administration well after the recent change of Government. We fully support the right of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and paragraph 4 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and we remain committed to the right of the people of the Falkland Islands to determine their own future. There will be no change in the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless the Islanders wish it.

We are confident that our relationship with Argentina will develop and believe that cooperation with Argentina on matters of mutual interest will enable us to manage our differences, whilst assisting in the development of confidence and trust in the South Atlantic.